Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-4. (cancelled)

5. (currently amended) An apparatus for controlling the operation of a power train in a motor vehicle, comprising:

a spark-ignited combustion engine,

a transmission operable by a transmission actuator,

an automated clutch operable by a clutch actuating mechanism, the automated clutch being disposed in a torque transmitting path between the combustion engine and the transmission,

means for controlling the clutch actuating mechanism so as to open and close the clutch with the power train being in a pull mode of operation,

means for changing the transmission from a first gear position to a second gear position via a neutral position by moving the transmission actuator, wherein the transmission in the second gear position has a lower ratio than in the first gear position, the changing means comprising a gear shifting member slidably disposed within a transmission guide path representing the neutral position, the gear shifting member being movable in a longitudinal direction of the transmission guide path by a gear selecting motor and being movable perpendicular to the transmission guide path by a gear shifting motor so as to engage a selected gear, wherein at least one gear position comprises either (i) a guide path inclined by an acute angle with respect to the transmission guide path or (ii) a guide path having a stepped shape with one leg parallel to the transmission guide path and one leg perpendicular thereto, such that it is necessary to actuate both the gear selecting motor and the gear shifting motor in order to move the gear shifting member from the neutral position to a gear engaged position, and

means for shifting an ignition angle of the combustion engine during the gear change step to cause the combustion engine to generate a negative engine torque, thereby decreasing engine speed when the transmission is disposed in the neutral position and enabling a desired engine torque to be rapidly realized as soon as the transmission actuator is disposed in the second gear position.

6. (currently amended) An apparatus as in claim 5, wherein the shifting means causes the ignition angle to be shifted such that a predetermined negative torque is supplied while the transmission is disposed in the neutral position and further comprising:

an adjustable torque control means for supplying the predetermined torque from the combustion engine by shifting the ignition angle.

7. (original) An apparatus as in claim 6, wherein the power train further comprises a control unit in communication with the transmission actuator and being arranged and constructed to generate signals for causing the transmission actuator to move.

8. (original) An apparatus as in claim 5, wherein the power train further comprises a control unit in communication with the transmission actuator and being arranged and constructed to generate signals for causing the transmission actuator to move.

9. (new) An apparatus for controlling the operation of a power train in a motor vehicle, comprising:

a transmission operable by a transmission actuator,

an automated clutch operable by a clutch actuating mechanism, the automated clutch arranged to be disposed in a torque transmitting path between an internal combustion engine and the transmission;

means for changing the transmission from a first gear position to a second gear position via a neutral position by moving the transmission actuator, wherein the transmission in the second gear position has a lower ratio than in the first gear position, the changing means comprising a gear shifting member slidably disposed within a transmission guide path representing the neutral position, the gear shifting member being movable in a longitudinal direction of the transmission guide path by a gear selecting motor and being movable perpendicular to the transmission guide path by a gear shifting motor so as to engage a selected gear, wherein at least one gear position comprises either (i) a guide path inclined by an acute angle with respect to the transmission guide path or (ii) a guide path having a stepped shape with one leg parallel to the transmission guide path and one leg perpendicular thereto, such that it is necessary to actuate both the gear selecting motor and the gear shifting motor in order to move the gear shifting member from the neutral position to a gear engaged position, and

means for shifting an ignition angle of the combustion engine during the gear change step to cause the combustion engine to generate a negative engine torque, thereby decreasing engine speed when the transmission is disposed in the neutral position and enabling a desired engine torque to be rapidly realized as soon as the transmission actuator is disposed in the second gear position.

10. (new) An apparatus as in claim 9, further comprising means for controlling the clutch actuating mechanism so as to open and close the clutch with the power train being in a pull mode of operation.

11. (new) An apparatus as in claim 10, wherein the shifting means causes the ignition angle to be shifted such that a predetermined negative torque is supplied while the transmission is disposed in the neutral position and further comprising:

an adjustable torque control means for supplying the predetermined torque from the combustion engine by shifting the ignition angle.

12. (new) An apparatus as in claim 11, wherein the power train further comprises a control unit in communication with the transmission actuator and being arranged and constructed to generate signals for causing the transmission actuator to move.

13. (new) An apparatus comprising:

an automatic shift transmission,

a gear shifting member slidably disposed within a transmission guide path representing a neutral position of the automatic shift transmission, the gear shifting member being movable in a longitudinal direction of the transmission guide path and being movable perpendicular to the transmission guide path so as to engage a selected gear,

a gear selecting motor arranged to move the gear shifting member in the longitudinal direction of the transmission guide path, and

a gear shifting motor arranged to move the gear shifting member perpendicular to the transmission guide path so as to reach a selected engaged gear position,

wherein disposed between the neutral position and at least one of a plurality of engaged gear positions, each respective engaged gear position representing a different gear ratio, is either (i) a guide path inclined by an acute angle with respect to the transmission guide path or (ii) a guide path having a stepped shape with one leg parallel to the transmission guide path and one leg perpendicular thereto, such that it is necessary to actuate both the gear selecting motor and the gear shifting motor in order to move the gear shifting member from the neutral position to the selected engaged gear position.

14. (new) An apparatus as in claim 13, further comprising means for shifting an ignition angle of an internal combustion engine coupled to the automatic shift transmission during a gear change step to cause the internal combustion engine to generate a negative engine torque, thereby decreasing engine speed when the transmission is disposed in the neutral position and enabling a desired engine torque to be rapidly realized as soon as the transmission actuator is disposed in the selected engaged gear position.

15. (new) An apparatus as in claim 14, wherein the shifting means causes the ignition angle to be shifted such that a predetermined negative torque is supplied while the transmission is disposed in the neutral position and further comprising:

an adjustable torque control means for supplying the predetermined torque from the internal combustion engine by shifting the ignition angle.

16. (new) An apparatus as in claim 15, further comprising an automated clutch operable by a clutch actuating mechanism, the automated clutch being disposed in a torque transmitting path between the internal combustion engine and the automatic shift transmission.

17. (new) An apparatus as in claim 15, further comprising a control unit in communication with the transmission actuator and being arranged and constructed to generate signals for causing the transmission actuator to move.